

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 75TH
(AND 95TH) ANNIVERSARY OF
THE GRAND RAPIDS JAYCEES

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor and recognize an organization in my hometown, the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber of Commerce. The Jaycees, as they are known, will celebrate both their 75th and 95th anniversaries this Saturday, November 20, 2004.

First, allow me to explain this apparent contradiction. The Jaycees were born as the Grand Rapids Junior Board of Trade Club at Grand Rapids Central High School 95 years ago in 1909 as a training program sponsored by the Grand Rapids Board of Trade and the Grand Rapids Public Schools. The Junior Board of Trade became the Jaycees in 1929 when the program affiliated with the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Since its creation, the club has been an engine of training and community service. In its earliest years, its members raised funds for local orphan newsboys, flu victims and soldiers, and provided chauffeur services at the annual Furniture Market when Grand Rapids was known as the Furniture Capital of the World. In the 1930s, the Jaycees helped lead the campaign to build the Grand Rapids Civic Auditorium and a "bigger, better" county airport.

The 1940s saw the Jaycees move Grand Rapids onto the professional sports scene by raising funds to purchase a franchise in the All-American Girls Baseball League (popularized in the movie "A League of Their Own") named the Grand Rapids Chicks. In the 1950s, the club operated what has become an enduring symbol of holiday spirit, the city's Santa Claus Parade, while also starting the area's Junior Achievement program, which today continues to foster the entrepreneurial spirit among local youngsters.

The City of Grand Rapids sought assistance in 1966 to fund city governmental programs and the Jaycees were there to lead a non-partisan campaign to implement a city income tax. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Jaycees

showed leadership by helping to form the West Michigan Environmental Action Council and the West Michigan Burn Unit. It also brought professional golf to the area by starting the Charity Golf Classic, an event that later grew into an official PGA Seniors Tour event. Most recently known as the Farmers Charity Classic, the tournament has raised more than \$3.5 million for local charities since its inception.

The Jaycees' civic involvement continues today. In the last decade, the group built one of the city's finest parks, the Mackay/Grand Rapids Jaycees Family Park and raised funds for the VanAndel Arena, one of the area's premier sports and entertainment venues. Even more recently, Jaycees raised funds for the new DeVos Place convention center and provides school supplies for area children.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Grand Rapids Jaycees is a remarkable organization that has provided invaluable leadership in making the Grand Rapids community a better place to live. I hope you will join me in celebrating its 75th and 95th anniversaries and wishing its members many, many more in the future.

TRIBUTE TO LYNN VICTOR

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lynn Victor of Santa Rosa, California, who retires after a remarkable 30-year career of creative and innovative work to improve the lives of low-income Americans.

Beginning at the Community Action Council of San Joaquin County in the 1970's, Lynn created innovative solutions to the needs of low-income communities. As energy costs rose, she helped to develop and then administered the Nation's first home weatherization programs funded by state regulated utility companies. Based on its great success, regulated utility companies in 22 states now provide weatherization services to millions of their low-income customers around the Nation. These programs not only help disadvantaged families reduce their energy costs, they also conserve energy for America, helping toward

energy self-sufficiency and reduced dependence on foreign oil.

Lynn then went on to design the Nation's first education program to help low-income and non-English speaking communities understand the deregulation of the telephone industry, enabling them to obtain and keep vital telephone service at the lowest possible cost. She designed a program to help millions of low-income people understand the privacy and security implications of new telephone technology. In this effort, she created education materials in 32 languages and Braille so that, for the first time, major telephone companies were able to reach California's huge immigrant populations through community action agencies, domestic violence shelters and other community based organizations. Once again, this program became a model for utility companies throughout the Nation to understand and address the needs of their hard-to-reach customers and bring them important consumer protection information.

Lynn's work has always featured collaborations with Community Action Agencies (CAA's), our Nation's network of over 1,000 anti-poverty agencies that serve millions of low-income Americans. CAA's operate Head Start, Energy Assistance Programs, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and other services that reach millions of disadvantaged Americans. For the past 4 years, Lynn has worked as Executive Director of the California/Nevada Community Action Partnership, helping this two state association of CAA's address the causes and symptoms of poverty in their communities.

An immigrant born in England, Lynn grew up in New Zealand, arriving in America in 1963. As a single parent of Michael, Elizabeth and Kristina Victor, Lynn had many hardships to face with no family to turn to. However, she found her new family in her community.

Mr. Speaker, as innovator, organizer and inspiration, this remarkable woman exemplifies the spirit of American immigrants who contribute so much to the vibrancy of our Nation. She is leaving her post having set a new standard for all who will follow after her, and she has put into place programs that will serve the neediest of us well in the future. Thank you, Lynn.